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The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malta, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions in which it requests the Secretary-General, the United Nations system and the international community to give the Central American peoples the fullest possible support and assistance for the maintenance and strengthening of peace, democracy and sustainable development as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions,

Reaffirming also all its relevant resolutions in which it stresses the importance of international economic, financial and technical cooperation and support, both bilateral and multilateral, aimed at promoting the economic and social development of Central America with a view to supplementing the efforts of the Central American peoples and Governments to consolidate peace and democracy,

Reaffirming likewise the close link and interaction between peace, democracy and sustainable development, as fundamental and permanent pillars of the political action of the Central American Governments aimed at realizing the legitimate aspirations of the Central American peoples with regard to economic development and social justice,

Recognizing that peace and democracy in Central America are the outcome of a long and arduous process in which obstacles have been encountered but have been overcome through the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the region, with the assistance and cooperation of the United Nations system and the international community,

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Commending the efforts of the Central American Governments to continue fulfilling the commitments they have assumed under national, regional and international agreements with a view to strengthening democratic governance in the region by promoting and protecting human rights, implementing social programmes designed to eradicate poverty and eliminate unemployment, improving public safety, strengthening the judiciary, consolidating a modern and transparent public administration and combating corruption,

Taking note of the existence throughout Central America of freely elected Governments, indicating the achievement of political, economic and social changes that are creating a climate conducive to the promotion of economic growth and advancement towards the further development of democratic, just and equitable societies,

Emphasizing in this context the importance of the progress made in connection with the Central American Integration System, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, the establishment of the regional social policy contained in the Treaty on Social Integration for Central America and the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, and in other areas,

Noting with satisfaction the progress made in the region in the search for peaceful solutions to existing territorial and border disputes, in accordance with the principles of public international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing that the slow development of the economies of the area has been aggravated in the past two years by an unfavourable international economic climate, which has had an adverse effect on the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the region to promote sustainable economic development in an efficient manner,

Recognizing with satisfaction the progress made by the Central American region in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the obligation of States to continue guaranteeing their effective enjoyment,

Recognizing the efforts of the region to enhance public safety by taking steps to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, arms limitation and control, and combating transnational organized crime and terrorism,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central America;[1]

2. *Commends* the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the Central American countries to consolidate peace and democracy and promote sustainable development by implementing the commitments adopted at the meetings and summit meetings held in the region;

3. *Recognizes* the progress made towards the implementation of the peace agreements in the region and in that context reiterates its special appreciation and congratulations to the people and Government of El Salvador for the successful fulfilment of the commitments set forth in those agreements and expresses its profound thanks to the Secretary-General for accompanying that process and for the commendable way in which he has carried out his verification work, which is considered to be completed;

[1] A/58/270.

4. *Urges* the Government of Guatemala to give renewed impetus to the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the peace agreements, in the context of reprogramming for the period 2001-2004, and to the understanding reached during the fifth meeting of the Consultative Group for Guatemala, organized by the Inter-American Development Bank and held in Guatemala City on 13 and 14 May 2003;

5. *Also urges* the Governments of the region to continue to guarantee free, fair and transparent elections with a view to consolidating democracy in Central America;

6. *Commends* the efforts and actions undertaken in the region to combat the scourge of corruption, urges all the States of the area to continue their actions with a view to eradicating that evil, and in that context takes note of the congratulations expressed in the report of the Secretary-General[2] with regard to the work done by the Government of Nicaragua in this field;

7. *Views with satisfaction* the approval of important reforms relating to the conduct of public affairs and judicial matters in Central America and in that context expresses special satisfaction concerning the progress made in Honduras towards completion of the political transformation process initiated in September 2001 and urges the Central American Governments to redouble their efforts with a view to strengthening those areas even further;

8. *Urges* Member States to continue combining efforts to adapt, strengthen and promote even further the Central American integration process and appeals to the international community to continue supporting that process in order to contribute to the sustainable development of the region;

9. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made by the Central American Governments in the peaceful settlement of their territorial and border disputes and strongly urges them to continue working to resolve outstanding issues in full compliance with the norms of international law and the relevant international decisions and judgements;

10. *Emphasizes* the importance of foreign trade for the development of Central America and in this context stresses the value of negotiating balanced free-trade agreements between the region and its counterparts outside the region;

11. *Reaffirms* the importance of the Puebla-Panama Plan as a means of promoting the economic and social development of the Mesoamerican region and recognizes in that connection the progress made in implementing the Plan;

12. *Urges* the Governments of the Central American countries to continue strengthening the institutions responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, thus helping to ensure their full and effective enjoyment by all the peoples of the region;

13. *Appeals* to the Central American Governments to continue their efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, promote arms limitation and control and combat transnational organized crime and terrorism by fulfilling the obligations assumed in the relevant international agreements;

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[2] See A/58/270, section D.

14. *Appreciates* the efforts of the Central American countries to strengthen public safety in the area by organizing summit meetings on that issue, such as the Special Summit on Regional Security held in the city of Belize on 4 September 2003 and the Special Summit on Security held in Guatemala City on 17 July 2003;

15. *Welcomes* the efforts made to strengthen civilian police forces and promote the demilitarization of the region, in particular the actions taken in the context of the regional plan to combat organized crime, and emphasizes the need for the international community to continue lending its support to the relevant institutions in the field of public safety;

16. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the intention of the Government of Guatemala to establish a commission for the investigation of illegal groups and clandestine security apparatuses, and urges the Secretary-General to support that initiative with a view to its prompt implementation;

17. *Appreciates* the initiative of the Government of Nicaragua relating to the programme for arms limitation and control in Central America to achieve a reasonable balance of forces and to foster stability, mutual trust and transparency, which will be implemented in the region in accordance with the established schedule;

18. *Emphasizes the need* for the international community, especially the organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the donor community, to continue their cooperation with and assistance to the Central American countries, including the provision of bilateral and multilateral financial resources, with the aim of supporting the promotion of sustainable development and the consolidation of peace, freedom and democracy in the region;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to lend his fullest support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, in particular their efforts to consolidate democracy through the promotion of integration and the implementation of a comprehensive sustainable development programme and to submit to the General Assembly a complete consolidated report on the implementation of all the relevant resolutions on Central America at its sixtieth session under the item entitled "The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", and decides that henceforth the item will be considered every two years.